

Univ teachers blast finance ministry circular

Staff Correspondent

THE Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Associations on Wednesday alleged that a section of bureaucrats was trying to create confusion about the status, unit and job nature of the public university teachers.

In reaction to Monday's circular of the finance ministry, the federation, representing 15,000 teachers of 37 public universities said it was part of the bureaucrats' 'ongoing conspiracy' against the university teachers protesting at the new pay structure which they termed discriminatory.

In a statement signed by the federation president, Professor Farid Uddin Ahmed, and secretary general ASM Maksud, the university teachers called for an independent inquiry into issuance of such a circular bypassing the cabinet decision.

On Saturday, the public university teachers announced that they would go for shut-down from January 11 unless the selection grades and the timescales, removed by the new pay structure, were restored.

The finance ministry in the clarification, signed by joint secretary Md. Jalal Uddin, said that the university

teachers' retirement age was 65 years while the government officials and employees retire at the age of 59.

It also mentioned that the civil servants had to remain prepared for work 24 hours although their office time is 9:00am to 5:00pm. The university teachers, unlike public servants, can work at private institutions besides their workplace, said the clarification.

The federation said the experienced public university teachers could work at private universities under specific guidelines and their percentage would not be more than 2-3.

It alleged that the serving

bureaucrats too work at private universities and other institutions.

Chairing the weekly cabinet meeting, prime minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday gave a directive to redress the grievances of the teachers serving the public universities over the discrepancies in the new pay structure.

The finance ministry, however, issued the circular later on the day without addressing their grievances.

The disparities in pays, perks and opportunities have sparked vehement protests from the vast majority of officers and the university teachers.